

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

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SUBJECT: Meeting with Mr. McCone, General Carter, Dr. Wheelon,
Mr. John Bross at CIA, Wednesday, 16 October 1963

Mr. McCone stated that his original plan for the NRO was to have a plan jointly agreed to with the Secretary of Defense and executed by the Secretary of Defense as Executive Agent. The Director of the NRO was to be the President of a "subsidiary corporation" of the Department of Defense. NRO was to utilize the existing capabilities of the CIA and of the Air Force and even of NASA. Mr. McCone's idea is still that the NRO should be a tasking organization and not a line organization and he maintains that the agreement signed on March 13th is ambiguous because in some places it speaks of direction and in other places of tasking. He maintains that to the extent of the March 13th agreement refers to a line organization, it is not in consonance with either his intent or his present desires. He believes that the NRO is not making use of the CIA capabilities; he believes that the resources, the imagination and the flexibility of the CIA are being lost to the program; he also believes that the depth of experience, organization and financial capability of the Air Force are

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not properly utilized. He wants both of these used; if this cannot be done with the NRO as it is, he wants the organization changed; he has followed this organization for two years; he sees misunderstandings, tensions, complaints and he believes that the time has come for drastic reorganization.

He believes that philosophical changes are necessary in the working of the NRO. He believes that the Air Force thinks that nobody but the Air Force must have aircraft and he considers this to be a non-acceptable thesis. He will agree that in principle it may appear wrong for the CIA to be flying airplanes but this is due to lack of success of previous Air Force efforts and, in fact, the situation is that the CIA is flying airplanes and doing it successfully. He is uneasy if essential reconnaissance capabilities are put in competition with respect to funds in the Air Staff and compared to bombers and tankers.

He, on the other hand, states he does not worry if the Air Force operates the aircraft provided the whole authority and the funding for the work is outside the Air Force.

He agrees that at the present time this competition of bombers and tankers does not exist but, on the basis of past experience, he believes that

this will occur. Dr. Wheelon states as examples the competition which is developing between the R-12 and the A-12 where "the tail may be wagging the dog". Gen. Carter at this point noted that no improvement had occurred in the utilization of joint staffs during the last period; he stated he had offered Dr. McMillan some excellent elements of the Central Intelligence Agency to work in his staff; he had had no acceptance, and, as a matter of fact, had had no answer. He sees no flattening in the curve of continuous increased control of the Air Force over the National Reconnaissance Program. Dr. Wheelon sees a pattern of decisions which are consistent with the hypothesis that the erosion and elimination of the CIA participation is intentional. Even if every decision were justifiable piece by piece, when the list of decisions ^{is examined} ~~are looked at~~ ^{as a} ~~from the~~ whole, the conclusion that an attempt is made to destroy the CIA partnership is inescapable. He states that papers prepared by the NRO are prepared by the Air Force officers in the Staff, that Mr. Kiefer is never asked to contribute and no inputs from the CIA are requested; the Air Force originates the papers and the NRO presents them as a fait accompli to the Agency personnel. Dr. Wheelon believes that the R-12 is more likely to give business to Lockheed

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* and is therefore getting unduly large attention; the scheduling of the R-12 is

crowding the security of the A-12 because an R-12 is due to fly to Edwards Air Force Base at the end of CY 64. In the aggregate, he feels that not enough attention is being given to either the CIA developments or the CIA problems and capabilities.

I requested a comment on the proposition that if the situation continues the way Mr. McCone stated, there seems to be an impasse; I do not see how it is possible to modify a situation whereby the Under Secretary of the Air Force is the NRO and at the same time it is requested that the Air Force be controlled by an Agency outside the Air Force. I asked Mr. McCone then, if he felt by this reasoning that the whole March 13th agreement should be abrogated and a radical different situation be established; I asked whether he considered it possible to modify the existing situation to meet his requirement.

He stated that there may be some way for the Under Secretary of the Air Force to be considered free from Air Force influence, but he did not see how this could be done. When the Secretary of the Air Force leaves town, the Under Secretary acts as the Secretary. He cannot help but seeing the series of decisions

made in the NRO as a part of a pattern which meets an Air Force doctrine.

He reported that he had participated to a meeting of the USIB regarding a most important intelligence estimate and that the Air Force had taken a consistent position related to increasing its budget rather than aimed at an realistic estimate of the enemy capabilities.

He believes that the objective of putting all reconnaissance in the Air Force is at the base of most of the decisions made by the NRO staff.

Going into detail, Mr. McCone complained about the NRO budget having been formulated without him ever being consulted. He maintains that the NRO budget was built with no guidance and it is being presented again as a fait accompli. He stated that this is another example where NRO which was contemplated as a joint planning organization is not carrying on its intent.

Mr. McCone went back to the budget that Dr. McMillan discussed with him and called my attention to the fact that the ^{CORONA}~~Corona~~ and "G" flights had been discussed with him, but that ^{GAMBIT}~~Gambit~~ J was a new program introduced without discussions with Mr. McCone and that no justification had been given to this project. He felt that other areas which were more important had been neglected and that,

for instance, a program involved the pointing camera but that no money was

devoted to follow-on ~~Corona~~ ^{CORONA} capability.

At this point, I stated that it was my understanding that at a budget discussion it was agreed that an amount equal to \$100 million would be left for advanced work in the whole area of airplane and satellites and payloads and that the decision as to whether one or another of the proposed projects would be carried on would be decided after this amount was accepted. I stated that, to the best of my knowledge, five different satellite projects had been considered for follow-on work: (1) a quick reaction satellite, (2) a high resolution broad coverage satellite, (3) a very high resolution pointing camera, (4) a covert satellite and finally, (5) a read-out satellite as mentioned by the ~~Comer~~ ^{COMOR}. I felt that no decision had been made regarding which one of these programs would be followed but that at this moment this decision was not necessary to agree on the budget. Mr. McCone recognized that this was the agreement but still felt that the very fact that the budget which was presented to him included the ~~Gambit J~~ ^{GAMBIT} was proof of this statement that decisions were being made without any inputs on the part of the CIA. He further stated that all conversations with

Dr. McMillan convinced him that it was the understanding of Dr. McMillan

that all satellites should be in the Air Force; he does not agree with this statement and wants it changed. I took issue with ~~his~~ statement by saying that it was based on the assumption that the use of a pointing camera was equivalent to Air Force handling while the use of a broad coverage camera implied a CIA handling. I stated that I saw no reason why a technical and programming decision should be tied to an assignment of responsibility.

Mr. McCone then changed the subject and discussed the problem of ~~Mystic~~ ^{MISTIC}.

He stated that he had given instructions to General Carter to establish a ~~Mystic~~ ^{MISTIC} centralized organization with CIA without waiting for an agreement with the Department of Defense. It was his intent that this organization would centralize all activities for the analysis of missile and space signals; he stated that he had a very excellent man becoming available and that he was organizing this group around him.

I reminded Mr. McCone that in discussion with Dr. Wheelon, I had agreed, that the original ~~Mystic~~ ^{MISTIC} concept would be modified to exclude all collection capabilities and dealing only with the analysis capabilities; that my

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proposal had been that the top capabilities available to the ~~DoD~~ namely the Aerospace Corporation group, the NSA group and part of the Lockheed group would be tasked jointly with the top capabilities of the Office of Scientific Intelligence of CIA to form an intentionally organized and properly controlled duplication. I stated that I believe we had agreed that duplication was not only desirable but necessary provided it was properly coordinated and controlled; I stated that Dr. Wheelon was supposed to prepare a paper for the implementation of this agreement and that I had never agreed to an organization centralized and controlled by CIA or financed by CIA as Dr. Wheelon had originally suggested. I stated that if the organization that Mr. McCone had discussed was going to take place, the most natural reaction on the part of the DoD intelligence community was that this was an internal affair of CIA and that we should not interfere and that no improvement in the mutual relationships between the top level of analysts would occur. I recommended that this move be postponed.

Finally, at the end of the conversation, Mr. McCone showed me a memorandum on TAGBOARD in which he agreed to our thesis of transferring the TAGBOARD control to ~~P~~ Program D at a suitable date.

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